of the domestic production of tea and as such the import of tea does not have an adverse effect on the domestic tea industry. In order to protect the domestic tea industry, the Government has increased the import duty on tea to 100% in the Budget fo 2002-03.

(d) A relief package has been announced by the Reserve Bank of India, which provides for restructuring/reschedulement of the loans outstanding in the tea sector from the commercial banks etc.

(e) No, Sir.

Export of Steel and Iron Ore

1805. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of steel and iron ore to China is on the decrease for the past sometime;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the figures both in value and quantity terms for the last five years, year-wise;

(c) the steps proposed to boost steel export to China in the coming years; and

(d) whether besides China, Indian steel has any demand in the International market and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) The details of India's exports of Iron ore, Iron and Steel bars/roads etc. and Primary and Semi-finished steel to China for the last five years are as under:

Item	Year	Value (Rs. Lakhs)	Quantity (in Metric Ton)
Iron Ore	1997-98	36239.34	6607.01
	1998-99	36931.55	4920.26
	1999-2000	35241.53	4109.36
	2000-2001	59366.24	6096.43
	2001-2002*	98653.03	10704.61
	2001 (April-June)*	20795.41	2296.73
	2002 (April-June)*	37841.42	4217.12

SOURCE: DGCI&S, Kolkata

*Provisional

Item	Year	Value (Rs. Lakhs)	Quantity (in Metric Ton)
Iron and	1997-98	34.18	0.17
Steel	1998-99	5.77	0.02
Bar/Rod	1999-2000	0.20	NA
etc.	2000-2001	381.83	1.69
	2001-2002*	462.47	1.25
	2001 (April-June)*	51.39	0.07
	2002 (April-June)*	521.54	0.98

SOURCE: DGCI&S, Kolkata
*Provisional

Item	Year	Value (Rs. Lakhs)	Quantity (in Metric Ton)
Primary &	1997-98	1742.55	11.63
Semi-	1998-99	1984.87	23.94
finished	1999-2000	1555.50	13.61
Iron &	2000-2001	12060.05	77.88
Steel	2001-2002*	5236.62	34.01
	2001 (April-June)*	2571.70	14.88
	2002 (April-June)*	16748.29	129.28

SOURCE: DGCI&S, Kolkata
*Provisional

(c) Efforts are being made to constitute a joint working group on steel with the Government of China to enhance bilateral co-operation in the steel sector. This is expected to provide boost to Indian exports to China. The recent visit of a high level delegation, headed by the Minister of State for Steel (Independent charge) to China has also helped to strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries in the steel sector.

(d) Yes, Sir. Exports figure relating to Iron and Steel bars/rods etc. and Primary and Semi-finished Iron and Steel to major international markets (including USA, Canada, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, West

Asia, Nepal, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, Spain, Sri Lanka and the countries of European Union) in the last four years are as under:

Year	Iron and Steel Bar/Rod etc.		Primary & Semi-finished Iron & Steel	
	Value in Rs. Lakhs	Quantity in Ton	Value in Rs. Lakhs	Quantity in '000 Ton
1998-99	34918.79	108.27	208699.32	1594.88
1999-2000	44574.79	139.09	316386.38	2224.04
2000-2001	69900.04	179.80	399884.37	2355.78
2001-2002*	79061.61	261.90	347208.10	2178.76
2001 (April-June)*	17420.31	46.39	92679.26	617.45
2002 (April-June)*	24975.61	77.08	97943.38	570.98

Source: DGCI&S, Kolkata
*Provisional

MMTC to enter agriculture products export business

1806. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation proposes to enter agriculture products export business;

(b) if so, the agri-products that would be exported; and

(c) the names of countries to which this will be exported alongwith the quantity of the products to be exported?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) MMTC (formerly Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation) is already in the business of export of agriculture products. Food Corporation of India (FCI) is supplying wheat and rice for export (purpose as per the Policy of the Government and efforts are made to export these to the international market at competitive rates, based on terms and conditions of FCI.

(c) Some SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation), ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and African